

ment, from the Veterans Affairs Administration, from the Housing and Urban Development Department, and from all of our law enforcement agencies, the Secret Service, the ATF, all of them, they were all Government bureaucrats. And I will never, knowingly, use that term again.

So we've all got to start with each other here. I don't know that that's a very good character example. I don't know that that does much to build good character, when you identify a group as a group and pretend that as a group there's something wrong with them.

So I would say to you, to all of you, I am basically very optimistic about the future of this country. I know that we're more violent than we need to be, but we always have been. We always have been, and we need—we've got to get a hold of it. And I know we have too many out-of-wedlock births, but it's a trend that is gripping an awful lot of Western countries. And people have forgotten, in my judgment, the profound emotional consequences to the children who grow up in unstable and inadequately supported environments. So we're not alone in that. We have way too much drug addiction, and we are really almost alone in that. Hardly any other advanced country has anything approaching the levels of violence and drug addiction we do. So we do have profound problems.

Our political debate is too polarized. And we have a lot of people who talk a lot about what's wrong with everybody else and don't do very much to change it. There are all kinds of problems. But look, this is not the Great Depression; this is not World War II; this is not the Civil War; we are not starting from scratch like the Founders did.

We know what to do. We know the difference between right and wrong. We know how to do this. And we can do what we have to do. We can do this. This is not a cause for wringing

of hands. It is difficult. It is a new challenge to figure out how we all work together and still leave room for our differences, how we identify the specific roles of the various influence centers in our society to reinstall character and give a good life to our people. But the fundamental fact is that this is a very great country, and nearly everybody is still getting up every day and doing the very best they can to do what is right. Nearly everybody desperately wants to have children who have good character and who do good and who are good, nearly everybody.

So I think what you are here about is profoundly important. But what I want to say to you is, do not be discouraged. In the light of the whole history of our Republic, this is our job at this time. It is not an undoable job. It is profoundly important. It will be difficult because of all the forces working on people's state of mind that undermine what we have to do. Because it's so much easier in the world today to identify what we're against instead of what we're for. It's so much easier in the world today not to look at the problems within our own hearts and minds because we can always find somebody we think is worse. So it is so much easier to put this off and delay it. And there are no institutions really for bringing us all together, across all the lines that divide us, in our common cause of building what is good about America and building up what is good within the character of our people. But we can do it. And I believe we will.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:30 a.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Amitai Etzioni, founder and chair, Communitarian Network.

## Statement on the Hospitalization of Les Aspin

May 20, 1995

I was saddened to hear that former Defense Secretary Les Aspin was hospitalized earlier today. Hillary and I wish him a speedy recovery.

Our prayers are with him and his family at this time.

Statement on the Second Anniversary of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993  
May 20, 1995

Two years ago today, I signed into law the National Voter Registration Act, better known as “motor-voter.” This commonsense law is making it easier for all Americans to register to vote. Motor-voter promised to open up the democratic process, and I am pleased to report that it is delivering on that promise.

Across America, nearly 2 million citizens have registered to vote in the 5 months since the law went into effect. In Georgia, 180,000 people registered in the first 3 months of this year, compared to only 85,000 all last year. In North Carolina, 30,000 citizens are registering per month, up from 6,000 a month in 1991. And

in Alabama, 43,000 people registered in the first 3 months of this year, compared to only 23,000 in the same period last year.

Motor-voter is working because it makes sense. The Act simply requires States to make registration easier by making more forms available, at motor vehicle offices, social agencies, and through the mail. It is that simple.

Motor-voter is the latest step in our Nation’s efforts to enfranchise all our citizens, giving them the power to affect their own destiny and our common destiny by participating fully in our democracy. I am proud to see it working so well.

Remarks at the White House Photographers Association Dinner  
May 20, 1995

I want to gets lots of records of you clapping for me. *[Laughter]* Well, ladies and gentlemen, tonight I feel your pain. *[Laughter]* Is there a courier around here anywhere? *[Laughter]* I hate these name tags. *[Laughter]*

I just wanted you to see what it feels like to have your picture taken when you’re eating. *[Laughter]*

I am here tonight to address a very relevant issue: The President is funny. The power of the Presidency makes me funny. *[Laughter]* If you don’t believe me, don’t laugh at these jokes, have a nice audit. *[Laughter]*

You know, I used to complain about how all of you were trying to get my attention, you know, for photos—“Over here!” “Over here!” “Over here!” “Over here!” “Just one more!” “Just one more!”—and I didn’t like the way you tried to get my attention until I heard about how the Russian police tried to get Jeremy Gaines’ attention last week. *[Laughter]* Now you can “just one more” me from now to kingdom come, and I won’t bite. *[Laughter]*

You know, I thought Mike McCurry was a model Press Secretary, even before I saw this month’s Esquire. Did you see him, with his model picture from the 1970’s? This man used

to be a model. This goes to show you that not all plastic surgery works. *[Laughter]* If you like the outfit he’s wearing tonight, however, you can order it from the White House spring catalog. *[Laughter]*

You know, I’m sorry I’ve never been here before. I really do like all of you very much. But it wasn’t until a few days ago that I found out that this is the only place I could be with you and you wouldn’t have all those question-askers around with you. *[Laughter]*

One of the things I want to do is to compliment Mike McCurry’s policy of having the Press Office staff in the White House send him a note each day to show what good deeds they’ve done for the press corps or kick a dollar into the pizza fund. This, of course, was an expansion, an improvement on my original idea in which everybody at the White House kicks in a dollar anyway and we just order pizza. *[Laughter]*

Tonight I want to share with you some of the notes Mike has received from the staff:

To Mike from McNeely: “Yesterday I performed my annual ritual of getting out of the shot.” Think about that. *[Laughter]*